

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-11 ADP-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 SSO-00 TRSE-00

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-03 INRE-00 RSR-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5967

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: ETRN, MX

SUBJECT: RETURN OF US RAIL CARS

REF: STATE 90179

11. EMBASSY TCO MET TODAY WITH FNM DIRECTOR GENERAL GOMEZ AND HIS KEY ASSISTANTS. ALSO PRESENT WAS THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF RAILWAYS OF THE SECRETARIAT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT, FRANCISCO SANDOVAL. ALL WERE IMPRESSED WITH URGENCY OF THE PROBLEM, AND FAMILIAR WITH THE CONSULTATIONS THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE IN APRIL BETWEEN THE AAR AND THE PREVIOUS FNM ADMINISTRATION, WITH THE COMMITMENTS MADE, AND WITH THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ICC.

2. GOMEZ EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE ADVANCE NOTICE GIVEN BY THE US GOVERNMENT OF POSSIBLE ICC ACTION AND OF THE WILLINGNESS SHOWN BY THE ICC TO COOPERATE WITH THE FNM IN RESOLVING THE PROBLEM ON AN URGENT BASIS. HE SAID THAT, IN ADDITION TO THE MEASURES ALREADY TAKEN AND REPORTED TO THE EMBASSY, FOUR ADDITIONAL LOCOMOTIVES ARE BEING MADE AVAILABLE AT THE LAREDO- NUEVO LAREDO GATEWAY BY THE FERROCARRIL DEL PACIFICO, THAT A MEMBER OF HIS STAFF WAS LEAVING FOR US TODAY TO NEGOTIATE THE LOAN OF SIX DOUBLE LOCOMOTIVES BY THE SOUTHER PACIFIC

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RAILWAY AND THAT WITHIN EIGHT DAYS ANOTHER EIGHT LOCOMOTIVES WOULD BE ASSIGNED BY THE FNM TO THE LAREDO GATEWAY. HE ADDED THAT OTHER US RAILWAYS, INCLUDING THE SANTA FE, WERE ALSO EXAMINING THE POSSIBILITY OF FURNISHING ADDITIONAL MOTIVE POWER TO MEXICO TO MEET THE EMERGENCY. GOMEZ' REACTION TO THE SUGGESTION THAT THE FNM ITSELF REQUEST EMBARGO ON FURTHER SOUTHBOUND MOVEMENTS TO US GATEWAYS WAS COMPLETELY NEGATIVE. SANDOVAL WAS OF THE VIEW THAT IF THE STRENUOUS EFFORTS NOW BEING MADE BY THE MEXICAN RAILWAYS SHOW THE RESULTS EXPECTED NO EMBARGO WILL BE NECESSARY. HE DID NOT THINK, HOWEVER, THAT RESULTS IN LINE WITH ICC EXPECTATIONS WOULD BECOME EVIDENT FOR ANOTHER WEEK AND HOPED THAT NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN BEFORE THAT TIME. HE SAID THAT HE AND GOMEZ WERE LONG- TIME FRIENDS AND HAD BEEN WORKING ON PROBLEMS OF THE MEXICAN RAILROADS FOR MANY YEARS, ADDING THAT PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA HIMSELF IS BEING KEPT INFORMED OF THE SITUATION. GOMEZ REFERRED TO THE CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF GRAIN AND FOODSTUFFS AND THE NEED TO AVOID ANY INTERRUPTION IN IMPORTS. WITH RESPECT TO THE AUTOMOBILE ASSEMBLY INDUSTRY, HE SAID THAT A PLAN WAS WORKED OUT OVER THE WEEKEND PERMITTING THE AUTOMOBILE COMPANIES TO RECEIVE AUTOMOBILES IN AN ADVANCED STATE OF ASSEMBLY AND IN TRAINLOAD LOTS FOR THE DURATION OF THE EMERGENCY.

3. LATEST STATISTICS ON US RAIL CAR ENTRIES AND RETURNS WERE GIVEN BY FNM AS FOLLOWS:

	ENTRIES	RETURNS
MAY 11	150	356
MAY 12	283	44
MAY 13	89	514

4. ECONOMIC COUNSELOR AND TCO ALSO MET THIS AFTERNOON WITH AMBASSADOR ESPINOSA DE LOS REYES OF FOREIGN MINISTRY TO DISCUSS PROBLEM. AIDE MEMOIRE LEFT WITH HIM (COPY BEING FORWARDED ARA/ MEX). AMBASSADOR ESPINOSA SAID HE WOULD COMMUNICATE INFORMATION IMMEDIATELY TO FOREIGN SECRETARY AND WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH FNM.

5. COMMENT: FIGURES FOR LAST THREE DAYS, WHICH SHOW AVERAGE NET DAILY RETURN OF 130 RAIL CARS, PLUS APPARENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DETERMINATION ALL INVOLVED GOM AGENCIES TO IMPROVE SITUATION ENCOURAGES EMBASSY TO HOPE THAT EMBARGO CAN BE AVOIDED. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE FOLLOW SITUATION CLOSELY, PARTICULARLY DAILY RETURN OF RAIL CARS.
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